

Early Childhood Education Family Workshop

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Sibling relationships in families with Deaf children



The Advantages of having a Deaf sibling. Siblings are more...

- * Empathetic
- * Bilingual
- * Resilient
- * Knowledgeable
- * Accepting of others with differences
- * Altruistic

Typical Sibling Experiences

- Competition
- Favoritism
- Fairness
- Sharing
- Protective
- Temperaments

Typical Deaf & Hearing Sibling Experiences

- Need to be perfect – not cause problems
- Can't express feelings – love/hate relationship
- Having an “assigned” parent
- Issues are minimized
- Isolated – afraid to have friends over
- High expectations – to look out for their sibling
- Social Justice police

Ensure Language Access

- ✳ Common for one person to be the “interpreter” & the “assigned parent” to the Deaf child
- ✳ Have times where the entire family communicates in sign
- ✳ Set aside time to have 1:1 spoken conversations with your hearing child.
- ✳ Set aside time to have 1:1 signed conversations with your Deaf child.
- ✳ Provide opportunities to meet similar siblings

Encourage sibling bonding



- ★ Find activities they can do together
- ★ Assign them a shared chore

Have fun together as a family

- * Don't over focus on the challenges
- * Have regular outings together
- * Watch a show together – “Switched at Birth”, “Atypical” – then discuss

Being Fair

- Is a good goal but impossible
- Avoid comparisons. Each child is unique!
- Celebrate progress and milestones of all your children
- Are you more or less permissive with your hearing or Deaf children?